

November 11, 2020

Centre County Native Earns Nation's Highest Military Honor

(Pennsylvania Military Museum, J. Gleim, Museum Curator)



Photo of PFC Foster J. Sayers.

PFC Foster J. Sayers was a machine gunner with the 357th Infantry, 90th Infantry Division. Born in Marsh Creek, Pennsylvania, in 1924 Sayers enlisted in the Army in January 1943 at the age of 19. He married his wife, Ellen, in April 1944 and two months later departed for France as an infantry replacement.

Overseas, PFC Sayers distinguished himself for his bravery and conduct on the battlefield. On July 15, 1944, he earned the Combat Infantryman Badge for exemplary conduct against the enemy. Just a few short months later, Sayers earned the Bronze Star for gallantry in action on September 18.

On November 12, 1944, PFC Sayers and his unit were engaged in fierce fighting near Thionville, France. During an attack on a heavily fortified enemy position atop a hill, Sayers again displayed extraordinary courage when he fearlessly ran up the steep approach toward his objective and set up his machine gun 20 yards from the enemy. Realizing it would be necessary to attract the full attention of the dug-in Germans... he picked up his gun, charged through withering machine gun and rifle fire... and killed 12 German soldiers with devastating close-range fire...". Sayers was killed by very heavy return fire, but his fearless assault enabled his company to sweep the hill with minimal casualties.



Photo of Foster's medals - Bronze Star, Medal of Honor, Purple Heart.

For his conspicuous gallantry above and beyond the call of duty, PFC Sayers was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor. The medal was presented in a ceremony to Sayers' young widow in 1945. The official citation presented to Mrs. Sayers states: "Private Sayers' indomitable fight spirit, aggressiveness and supreme devotion to duty live on as an example of the highest traditions of the military service."

Photo Mrs. Ellen Sayers, wife to Foster, accepting the MOH.



Sayers is buried in Schenks Cemetery, Howard, Pennsylvania. The Foster Joseph Sayers Reservoir near Howard, Pennsylvania is named in his honor.